

Ms. Mutsch (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*):

I thank the United Kingdom presidency for taking the initiative to hold this open debate, which accords the fight against human trafficking the importance it deserves. This morning's briefings rightly underlined the need to redouble efforts to combat this scourge, which affects millions of people.

Luxembourg fully supports the intervention to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Luxembourg is aware of its responsibilities as a country of transit and destination. No country can claim to be spared from the scourge of trafficking in human beings.

The overwhelming testimony of survivors of the slave trade shows how much the latter is the very negation of humanity. Let us recall here the words (see S/PV.7685) of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, who exposed the sexual slavery perpetrated by Da'esh against civilian populations, in particular Yazidis in Iraq. It is mainly women and children who are targeted, and the international community must assume its responsibility to protect these populations.

Displaced persons regardless of their status — whether internally displaced persons, migrants or refugees — are particularly vulnerable. That should be borne in mind at the time of the adoption, in 2018, of the draft global compact on refugees and the draft global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In the European context, Luxembourg is committed to trafficking that affects migrants and refugees. My country is therefore stepping up its participation in Operation SOPHIA by providing a second maritime surveillance aircraft. The objective of this European Union operation, authorized by the Security Council, is to dismantle the economic model of the networks of human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean Sea. It has already saved thousands of lives.

Also at European level, we participated in the Dutch initiative "Team Work!" to strengthen cooperation against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of exploitation through labour.

Luxembourg made the fight against trafficking in human beings a priority of its presidency of the Benelux Union in 2016. We have renewed cooperation between our three countries and brought together actors on the ground, including non-governmental organizations, in order to provide better assistance to victims of trafficking.

At the national level, our policy to combat trafficking in persons employs a horizontal approach that involves all stakeholders. In 2009, we set up an inter-ministerial monitoring committee, whose work has led in particular to the adoption by the Government of a national action plan against trafficking in persons, in December 2016. In my role as Minister of Equal Opportunities, I presented, along with the Minister of Justice, a strategy to regulate prostitution, which provides for the strengthening of the legislative framework. A draft law that aims to punish the clients of victims of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation is being considered by Parliament. Finally, a national awareness campaign was launched at the initiative of the monitoring committee to better detect and counter the trafficking in persons in all its forms.

The perpetrators of human trafficking must be held accountable for their actions, whether at the national or international level. Here too, the International Criminal Court has a role to play. The Rome Statute identifies trafficking in persons, women and children in particular, as a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population

and with knowledge of the attack. Justice, by its punitive and dissuasive nature, is indispensable to our collective action.